

Good News of Peace

July 2017 A.D.

A Caring Family ✦ Reaching Out ✦ Sharing Christ's Love ✦ Teaching God's Word!

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Day of Serving

On Tuesday, June 20, 19 adult and youth members spent the morning and the early part of the afternoon either raking and cleaning up the grounds or scraping and painting windows at Ocqueoc Outdoor Center. This event was the second annual Local Mission Project sponsored by the Board of Stewardship. It was a pleasant day weather-wise, and we were thankful the weather cooperated; initially the forecast called for rain. Our projects were not glamorous, but they were greatly appreciated. We simply did what most needed to be done the day we were there. That, of course, is what serving is all about.

While we were there, I had the opportunity to visit with the Caretaker for a bit, who was there to make sure we had everything we needed. His part-time job, in his retirement, is to provide general maintenance at the center. However, he does so without much of a budget at his disposal. That means, when something needs to be repaired or replaced, often the cost must be donated, or the work is simply left undone in many cases. Prior to his retirement, he indicated that he worked providing maintenance for a community college. There, when something was needed, he had the freedom to go ahead and do it. At Ocqueoc, unfortunately that isn't usually the case.

All the work that we did while there is work the Caretaker indicated he would have eventually had to do on his own. Either that, or it wouldn't have gotten done. That isn't to mention the projects he doesn't have the time or the resources to complete. As just one example, several within our group noticed how much attention many of the windows needed; the work they did barely scratched the surface. In the process of the general cleanup the rest of our group was providing, I couldn't help but notice some scraping and painting that needed to be done in a few other places, as well. While talking with the Caretaker, it was apparent that any number of other projects are in need of similar attention.

For many of you, Ocqueoc is a much more familiar place. I can still count on two hands the number of times I have been out there in five years. Most, if not all, of my visits have been in conjunction with the

annual trip made by the St. John's students at the beginning of the school year. What most of the folks who utilize the center throughout the year may not realize, however, is that it doesn't maintain itself. When a group visits, and they notice that certain things seem a bit unkempt or run down, as I have in the past, there's a reason. All that may be needed is a little TLC.

In 1 Peter 4, Peter says, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

I'm not good for much when it comes to maintenance. I know how to rake, how to pull weeds, and how to hold a paintbrush; if something more than that is needed, I'm probably not your guy. For me, the biggest part of serving is often simply being willing to give the gift of time. By giving up five hours of my day last week, working alongside roughly a dozen other people doing the same thing, it was rewarding to know that we were able to leave the center looking a little better than when we arrived.

For others of you who are far more gifted than I, maybe the biggest part of serving, in addition to the time required, is recognizing that there are places in the community where your gifts might be put to good use. Traditionally, as Christians we have tended to conclude that if someone is going to use their gifts in service to the Lord, the best place in which to do so is at the church. But what if a neighbor, or someone in need in the community, needs something done that you might have the expertise and/or the experience to provide? Or what about a community gathering place like Ocqueoc? When it is done in the hope of reflecting the love of God in Christ, is that kind of serving of any lesser value? I don't believe so.

Who knows what kind of difference that kind of serving might make in someone else's life? Who knows when someone might ask you, "Why are you doing that?" And you just might have the opportunity to tell them briefly why it is such a privilege to be able to serve others in Jesus' name. Maybe it is time for us to start thinking of underfunded places in our community like Ocqueoc as God-given opportunities to serve the people of our community while expecting nothing in return. And

maybe it is time for us to start placing a higher value on service of that kind. It may not benefit our congregation directly, but who knows what kinds of doors ministry like that might open?

Thrivent & Thrivent T-Shirts

An Action Team Grant from Thrivent Financial covered the cost of lunch and a few supplies for our Local Mission Project Work Day. In conjunction with the grant, Thrivent provided a supply of "Live Generously" t-shirts for our volunteers. A handful remain, though mostly in smaller sizes. They are currently hanging on the coat rack by the mailboxes in the narthex. Please help yourself.

"Joining Jesus" Stories

Just another reminder, as a way of encouraging one another, that in the coming weeks members of the congregation are invited to consider sharing their "everyday mission" stories with the rest of the congregation. Do you have an encounter or a conversation with someone you'd like to share? Do you have a neighbor for whom you have been starting to pray intentionally? Are you planning to host a party for your neighbors? Or are you wanting to start a missional community of your own and to invite other members to join you? Share your stories anytime with Pastor by sending him an E-mail or by writing something about them and dropping them off in the office. I would love to fill my office door with examples of what Jesus is doing in our lives and the lives of the people around us!

Neighborhood Parties

A reminder, as well, that we recently applied for and received a Thrivent Action Team Grant in the amount of \$250 in order to assist and encourage members who might be interested in hosting a gathering of some type for their neighbors this summer. Doing so is one point of emphasis in Pastor Greg Finke's book, *Joining Jesus on His Mission*, which we recently utilized for a sermon series. If you are interested in some suggestions for how to go about hosting such a gathering, see Chapters 17 ("The Missional Party") and 18 ("What Will Your Story Be?") in the book (a couple of extra copies are available to borrow in the narthex). If you are interested in requesting some start-up funds for this purpose, please see Pastor or Julie any time.

Worship Music Preference Survey

This survey from the Board of Elders will remain available in the narthex through Sunday, July 2. Every member of the congregation, regardless of age, is asked to take a few moments to complete the survey, which may be returned to the designated box in the narthex. Surveys should be returned no later than Sunday, July 2. It is hoped that the results of this survey will be representative of the entire congregation and will assist the Elders in determining how best to move forward in this particular area of our congregation's life and ministry. Please see Pastor or any member of the Board of Elders with questions or concerns.

New Sign

At the Voters Meeting on Sunday, June 25, by a slight majority the Voters voted to proceed with a new digital sign for the front lawn. This sign would replace both our current Peace sign and the marquee sign next to the driveway. The next step in the process is to move towards raising the necessary funds this summer and fall.

A fair amount of debate took place during the meeting, making it apparent that a number of different, equally valid, perspectives were and are present amongst members. A brief follow-up word to ALL members:

To those opposed to the purchase of a new sign, please be encouraged that, while perhaps not essential, there are many ways in which the sign will be very useful in enhancing and complementing our congregation's ministry in the years to come. Once the sign is in place, I have no doubt that we will very quickly discover how versatile and powerful it is.

To those in favor of purchasing the new sign, please keep things in perspective and bear in mind that the sign itself is not ministry; it is nothing more than a ministry tool. God has given us plenty more to do in the way of ministering in and to our community, and we have much to learn as a congregation about how to carry out our ministry effectively in a rapidly-changing society.

To all members, please join me in praying continually that God will always be glorified, honored and praised – and His kingdom advanced – by all that we do as a congregation. We are not always going to agree with each other, but we ought still to remain united in prayer.

I will try again to continue my summary of *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* next month. Until then, a blessed summer to each of you in Christ, our Savior!

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

Board of Elders

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the worship preference survey. All input is very helpful with our contemporary service and all services here at Peace Lutheran Church. If you haven't filled out a survey, you may talk to an Elder and give them your comments and ideas.

Pastor Riddle and family will be on vacation July 7-13, including Sunday, July 9th. Our guest pastor will be Pastor Galen Grulke.

Membership changes for June are: Julie Thompson, transfer out to Caro, MI and Drew Flewelling, from baptized member to confirmed member. Good job on your confirmation exam, Drew!

Summer is here! We did have a few warm days so far. Hope that your summer is going well for you. With all the rain that we have been receiving, the garden is doing well and growing more and more every day. As we read and study God's Word daily, we too will grow—in our faith. Just like we water and feed our plants, we watch them grow and receive the fruits of the harvest. So, as we water and feed our souls, we too receive the fruit of God's harvest. Have a wonderful 4th of July! God bless America!

The Lutheran Hour

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at www.lutheranhour.org. Now you can also download the new Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at www.lhm.org/apps/.

July 2

"Serving in the Power of the Spirit"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
Because Christ has paid our debt, we are no longer captive to sin but are free to live for others, in His name.

(Romans 7:1-13)

July 9

"Living as Christ's Person in Repentance and Faith"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
Life out of control? Turn to God in repentance and faith. Let Him act before you do.

(Romans 7:14-25)

July 16

"The Power of a Spirit-Given Adoption!"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
God provides for your adoption into His family, by grace through faith in Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 8:12-17)

July 23

"Overcoming This World's Obstacles"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
Despite all the world's brokenness, God has something better in store for us, through Christ.

(Romans 8:18-25)

July 30

"Confidence to Face Whatever Comes Our Way"
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz
No matter what life throws our way, God promises that His eternal purposes can never be thwarted.
(Romans 8:28-39)

Stewardship Corner

"I will bless you ..., so that you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2). The Lord blessed Abraham so that he would be a blessing. How did He bless Abraham? He promised that from his seed would come the savior of the nations. And Abraham believed that promise, trusted that the Lord would provide it just as He had promised. Thus, everything Abraham did was colored by that promise. He willingly gave of himself and his household in service to the Lord in view of that promise.

Our Father in heaven has richly blessed us. Not only has He given us everything that we need to support this body and life, but He has also provided that promised seed in His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the Savior of the nations. He is the Redeemer of the world. He is the One who has conquered sin, death, and the power of the devil by His death, resurrection, and ascension.

Just as we are richly blessed, we are also thereby freed to be a blessing. Since God has endowed us with His gifts, we are set to endow others. Thus, we give of the blessings we have received so that others may be blessed. We do this in our homes, our communities, and our churches. We press the blessings God has lavished upon us in service to those around us. We use our time, our talents, and our treasures to be a blessing even as they have been a blessing to us.

The Lord blesses us. And He enlists us to be a blessing to others. So, whenever you put that envelope in the collection plate, when you set out to serve at the local food pantry, when you sit down to help your kids with homework, think of this: The Lord has blessed you, so that you will be a blessing.

Taken from www.lcms.org